

The Assertiveness Questionnaire

To further clarify those situations in which you could be more assertive, complete the following questionnaire, developed by Sharon and Gordon Bower in their book *Asserting Yourself*. Check those items that apply in column A, and then rate the comfort level of those situations for you in column B:

- 1 = comfortable
- 2 = mildly uncomfortable
- 3 = moderately uncomfortable
- 4 = very uncomfortable
- 5 = unbearably threatening

(Note that the varying degrees of discomfort can be expressed whether your feelings are angry, fearful, or passive.)

A) Check here if the item applies to you	B) Rate from 1 to 5 for comfort level
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When do you behave nonassertively?

_____	_____	Asking for help
_____	_____	Stating a difference of opinion
_____	_____	Hearing or expressing negative feelings
_____	_____	Hearing or expressing positive feelings
_____	_____	Dealing with someone who refuses to cooperate
_____	_____	Speaking up about something that annoys you
_____	_____	Talking when all eyes are on you
_____	_____	Protesting a "rip-off"
_____	_____	Saying no
_____	_____	Responding to undeserved criticism
_____	_____	Making requests of authority figures
_____	_____	Negotiating for something you want
_____	_____	Having to take charge
_____	_____	Asking for cooperation
_____	_____	Proposing an idea
_____	_____	Asking questions

- _____ Dealing with attempts to make you feel guilty
- _____ Asking for service
- _____ Asking for a date or appointment
- _____ Asking for favors
- _____ Other _____

Who are the people with whom you are nonassertive?

- _____ Parents
- _____ Fellow workers, classmates
- _____ Strangers
- _____ Old friends
- _____ Spouse or significant other
- _____ Employer
- _____ Relatives
- _____ Children
- _____ Acquaintances
- _____ Salespeople, clerks, hired help
- _____ More than two or three people in a group
- _____ Other _____

What do you want that you have been unable to achieve with nonassertive styles?

- _____ Approval for things you've done well
- _____ To get help with certain tasks
- _____ More attention from, or time with, your partner
- _____ To be listened to and understood
- _____ To make boring or frustrating situations more satisfying
- _____ To not have to be nice all the time
- _____ Confidence in speaking up when something is important to you
- _____ Greater comfort with strangers, store clerks, mechanics, and so on
- _____ Confidence in asking for contact with people you find attractive
- _____ To get a new job, ask for interviews, raises, and so on
- _____ Comfort with people who supervise you or work under you

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| _____ | _____ | To not feel angry and bitter a lot of the time |
| _____ | _____ | To overcome a feeling of helplessness and the sense that nothing ever really changes |
| _____ | _____ | To initiate satisfying sexual experiences |
| _____ | _____ | To do something totally different and novel |
| _____ | _____ | To have time by yourself |
| _____ | _____ | To do things that are fun or relaxing for you |
| _____ | _____ | Other _____ |

Evaluating your responses. What do your answers tell you about areas in which you need to develop more assertiveness? How does nonassertive behavior contribute to the specific items you checked on the "What" list? In developing your own assertiveness program, you might initially want to focus on items you rated as falling in the 2 to 3 range. These situations are likely to be the easiest to change. Items you rated as very uncomfortable or threatening can be handled later.

Learning to Be Assertive

Learning to be assertive involves working on yourself in six distinct areas:

1. Developing nonverbal assertive behaviors
2. Recognizing and being willing to exercise your basic rights as a human being
3. Becoming aware of your own unique feelings, needs, and wants
4. Practicing assertive responses—first through writing and role-playing and then in real life
5. Assertiveness on the spot
6. Learning to say no

Each of these areas is considered in the remainder of this chapter.

Developing Nonverbal Assertive Behaviors

Some of the nonverbal aspects of assertiveness include

- *Looking directly at* another person when addressing them. Looking down or away conveys the message that you're not quite sure about asking for what you want. The opposite extreme, staring, is also unhelpful because it may put the other person on the defensive.